

REMARKS

In the Official Action mailed on **23 March 2007**, the Examiner reviewed claims 1-3, 5-7, and 34-44. The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a). Claims 34-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Claims 34-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Claims 1-3, 5-7, 34-36, and 39-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Matson et al. (USPN 4,695,112 hereinafter "Matson"). Claims 37-38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Matson.

Objections to Drawings

The drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a).

Applicant has amended claims 36 to clarify that the circuit board becomes at least partially non-functional when the signal conductor on the tab/key is decoupled from the signal conductor on the circuit board (see page 3, lines 17-24 of the instant application). No new matter has been added.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 34 and 43 were rejected as being indefinite (see item 4 in the Office Action letter dated March 23, 2007). To explain claims 34 and 43, Applicant will make reference to FIGs. 1-4. First, note that tab and key are interchangeable terms because they are a protuberance of the assembly (see page 3, lines 17-19 of the instant application).

Referring to FIG. 1, note that trace 106 starts at one end of assembly 102 and snakes around through key 104 and out the other end of assembly 102. In FIG. 2, traces 212 enter from the left side of assembly 202 to key 204 so that the traces are coupled with ID Chip 210. In FIG. 3, trace 308a enters from the left

side of assembly 302 into the area marked as key 304. In FIG. 4, trace 408 enters from the left side of assembly 402 into key 404.

In each of these cases illustrated in FIGs. 1-4, the removal of the tab severs the traces. In FIG. 1, removing key 104 breaks trace 106. The breaking point can be anywhere along the “u-shaped” section of assembly 102. For example, the vertical section on the right-side of assembly 102 (next to the key 104 marking) can be removed, thus severing trace 106. In FIG. 2, slits 206a and 206b facilitate removal of key 204 (see page 5, lines 2-5 of the instant application. Thus, the area enclosed by the slits and the edge of the assembly is removed. As can be seen, traces 212 are therefore severed from assembly 202. In FIG. 3, removing key 304 (which includes the area between slots 306a and 306b) severs trace 308a and 308b. In FIG. 4, removing key 404 (which includes the area between channels 406a and 406b) severs trace 408.

Hence, as can be seen, removing the tab separates the module and causes the signal trace to be broken.

The “identification module” referred to in Claim 34, line 7 is fully supported by the structures illustrated in FIGs. 1-2, and on page 4, lines 12-20 and page 5, line 17-24 of the instant application. Note that in identification module is a generic term to indicate that a mechanism that can be used to identify the assembly. A person of ordinary skill in the art, upon reading the claims and the specification will understand that the identification module refers to bar codes, holograms, etched identification strings, electronic identification chips, etc. as specified in page 4, lines 14-16 and page 5, lines 17-22 of the instant application. Also note that identification 110 in FIG. 1 is an identification module as defined in the specification (see page 4, lines 12-20). Hence, claim 34 does not need to be amended because the claims are fully supported by the figures and the specification.

Claims 34-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Please refer to the

discussion above regarding FIGs. 1-4. Note that the removal of the key/tab/protuberance is described on page 3, lines 17-19 of the instant application. Applicant has amended claims 34 and 43 to clarify that the tab is *decoupled* from the assembly (see page 3, lines 19-21; and page 4, lines 3-7 of the instant application). Applicant has also amended claims 35-36 to correct antecedent basis.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Independent claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 were rejected as being anticipated by Matson. Applicant respectfully points out that Matson discloses a **locking mechanism which prevents the forceful removal of terminals from connector housings** (see Matson column 1, lines 25-32; column 1, lines 44-46; column 3, lines 39-41; column 3, line 67 to column 4, line 2; and column 4, lines 19-24).

In contrast, the present invention provides a mechanism which proves that an assembly has been disabled (see page 3, lines 11-14 of the instant application). **After the mechanism is detached, it cannot be reattached** (e.g., it is physically broken off of the assembly) (see page 3, lines 19-24; page 4, lines 9-11; page 5, lines 7-9; page 6, lines 12-13; page 6, lines 19-21; and FIGs. 1-4 of the instant application). This is beneficial because an entity charged with disposal of the assembly can detach the mechanism to disable the mechanism and to prove that the assembly has been disabled (e.g., show the removed mechanism).

There is nothing in Matson which suggest a mechanism, which after being detached cannot be reattached. Accordingly, Applicant has amended claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 to clarify that the present invention is directed to a mechanism, *wherein after the mechanism is detached from an assembly, the mechanism cannot be reattached to the assembly*. These amendments find support on page 3, lines 19-24; page 4, lines 9-11; page 5, lines 7-9; page 6, lines 12-13; page 6, lines 19-21; and FIGs. 1-4 of the instant application.

Hence, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 34, 43, and 44 as presently amended are in condition for allowance. Applicant also submits that claims 2-3 and 5-7, which depend upon claim 1, and claims 35-42, which depend upon claim 34, are for the same reasons in condition for allowance and for reasons of the unique combinations recited in such claims.

CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the present application is presently in form for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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